

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Remarks During a Meeting With Opposition Leaders in Moscow, Russia**  
*July 7, 2009*

*[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]*

—not simply tolerate dissenting voices but also to respect and recognize dissenting voices. This is one of the elements, along with an independent media and adherence to the rule of law, that has helped to solidify our own Government during some very difficult times. I said in my remarks recently that the fact that I sit before you as President of the United States is a testimony to the power of dissent in the United States over time in creating a different reality. And it's also an important tool for fighting corruption.

So I think it's very important that I come before you with some humility. I think in the past there's been a tendency for the United States to lecture rather than to listen. And we, obviously, still have much work to do with our own democracy in the United States, but nevertheless, I think we share some common values and interest in building a strong, democratic culture in Russia as well as the United States.

And I want to say that this is, by the way, something I do in every country I visit. So whether I visit—travel to Turkey or I travel to England, wherever I go, I think it's always important for me to recognize that the particular head of state that I'm meeting with is the head of the government, but that the society itself represents a larger spectrum of views.

So I, again, am grateful to all of you for taking the time. And rather than spend all the time talking, what I'd like to do is listen to you and find out your perspectives, your views, and we can go in any direction that you prefer. We can talk about policy and specific concerns or questions you may have for me. Or we can talk more generally about how democracy is progressing—

*[At this point, the remarks continued and no transcript was provided.]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:14 p.m. at the Ritz Carlton hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Moscow, Russia :: Opposition leaders, meeting.

*Locations:* Moscow, Russia.

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